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CURTAINING THE HOME.

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A radio interview between Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter, assistant to the chief, and Miss Bess Viemont, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered through WRC and 37 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, September 25, 1930.

How do you do, Homemakers!

If it isn't one thing with us, it's another: something to eat, something to wear, something for our homes. And today, curtains. With autumn approaching, we center our attention on making the inside of the house inviting, and curtains, or as the specialist says "window treatments," play a very important part in attractive interiors. No one can tell you better about this than Miss Bess Viemont who is with me to give you, first hand, some of her ideas on curtaining the home. When we were talking about this interview she struck the keynote of curtain selection more clearly for me than anyone ever had. She said that before she could answer definite questions about materials or about types of curtains she had to know something about the relation of the window to the outside -- something about the outlook from the window to be curtained. Express that idea again, won't you, Miss Viemont?

MISS VIEMONT:

Why, yes, Mrs. Carpenter. I guess I said something like this: Some windows have a lovely view to disclose -- of a garden or a hillside, a group of trees, or a sunset. In the city where open spaces are not so great the view from the window may open on a green lawn or on a red tile roof shining through the branches of a tree. Any window with a beautiful outlook should be curtained to make the view a picture in a frame. -- But most every home has one or two windows that face something not so attractive, and then the aim is to select curtains that close out the view, that veil it so the eyes rest on the curtains themselves and travel on around the room. You see the transparency of the drapery material, the color, the design, all depend on whether you want to attract the eye outside or hold the attention inside.

MRS. CARPENTER:

Now that is the idea, homemakers, that caught my fancy. You may have thought of it often yourselves, but I hadn't. It makes me want to ask Miss Viemont another question. Suppose a window has an unfortunate view towards something very unsightly, or perhaps towards a solid brick wall that shuts out much of the light. How can such a window be curtained to shut out the view and still let in enough light?

(over)

MISS VIEMONT:

That offers a real problem but it can be solved. One of the important functions of a window is, of course, to make the room light. If in order to screen an unsightly or unattractive view we must select heavy material which shuts out much or all of the light, we must then create an impression of light in some way. Instead of using deadly white material that glares at us when we enter the room, suppose we select a very deep ecru, gold, or perhaps a rose, peach, or apricot for the glass curtains. These are the colors of sunlight and make the room cheery.

MRS. CARPENTER:

That's a point especially worth noting just now when colored curtains are such a vogue, because we do like to be in style in our homes as well as in our clothes. You spoke of using those colors for glass curtains wherever the effect of sunlight is desired. Do you mean they would be suitable in any room in the house?

MISS VIEMONT:

Yes, they would. Of course various shades of ecru have always been used in any room, but just now pronounced colors are more fashionable. Those bordering on pastels, such as peach, lemon-yellow, or apricot, are better for the bedroom, both because of their delicacy and because they can be used to express the color preference of the person whose room it is. But in the living room where the entire family gathers and entertains friends, too, the deeper and richer colors such as dark ecru, gold or rose are more suitable.

MRS. CARPENTER:

What you have just said recalls to my mind vividly one of the most unattractive living rooms I have seen in many a day, and it had rose marquissette glass curtains. I wish you had seen it too so you could tell me what was the matter with it.

MISS VIEMONT:

Perhaps I can without having seen it because after all there are some principles that must be observed always. The curtains as all other furnishings must form a part of a whole scheme rather than stand out conspicuously. Colors differ greatly in their effect. Red and the various tones of red seem to fill up a small room -- to make it appear smaller. The rose curtains that you saw may have offended your taste, because the color of the curtains itself was unattractive, or because it was a tint that was different from anything else in the room and so jarred on your asthetic sense. No matter what color is chosen for the curtains it must be repeated elsewhere in the room. The color of the glass curtain may be the background color of the side draperies, or one of the colors in the figure of the side drapery, the upholstery, or a picture. Of course, on the other hand this repetition must not

be overworked. Remember, the brighter the color, the less of it can be used. If it is rose or gold perhaps it can be repeated in only a vase, a pair of candles, or the binding of a few books. If it is a more somber color that will attract less attention it can be used in larger quantities.

But you cannot decide on the color of your curtains without giving due consideration to the texture of the material, because texture affects color very decidedly.

MRS. CARPENTER:

That opens a whole new subject, doesn't it Miss Viemont, the question of selecting the right material. How are we homemakers to choose from the great variety of fabrics the stores carry? In doing over our windows this fall shall we choose for side draperies cretonne, chintz, velour, rep, or what?

MISS VIEMONT:

That all depends upon your other furnishings, upon what will be most appropriate with them. Just as the color of the curtains must fit into a scheme, so must the kind of material. For instance, velvet portieres would be as out of place in a little old-fashioned cottage as dyed cheesecloth curtains would be in a room with rich Oriental rugs -- although each is a good material in its proper setting. Appropriate combinations of furnishings whether simple and inexpensive or elaborate and costly always make enjoyable rooms. Some of the most inviting and artistic rooms are furnished with the simplest and least expensive things, all chosen to harmonize. But to answer your question more directly. With winter so near at hand the materials that suggest warmth are the best choice. Some fabrics belong to the all-year-round class. A few examples are cretonne, hand blocked linen, and madras. Others are distinctly seasonal. Glazed chintz is an excellent example of a summer material. Its very finish suggest coolness for a hot day. Good winter materials are terrycloth, rep, and velour. Their surface finish and their weight make them seem warm. Terrycloth with gay colors in the design combined with theatrical gauze make delightful winter curtains for the informal living room. Or striped novelty with crossbarred marquisette would be a bit more formal and offer unlimited possibilities to express individuality.

MRS. CARPENTER:

Miss Viemont could go on and on with her suggestions for window treatments, but since there isn't time for that let us send you her bulletin "Window Curtaining," F.B. 1633, which will be off the press very soon we hope. It is one of our series featuring the selection of fabrics for various uses. Send in your request for the curtain bulletin now while you think of it, and don't be discouraged if it doesn't come for some time. We will send you a copy just as soon as it is ready.

And now we must say goodbye Homemakers, until next Thursday.

